

Senior Appreciates Convenience and Safety

Outline of Need:

Irline Barnica, an 84-year-old homeowner living on a fixed income in Ogallala, Nebraska lacked having a bathroom on the main floor of her home. Irline had to maneuver down steep basement steps in order to use the only bathroom in the house. This task had grown more difficult as she aged which caused her to lean forward as she walked, forcing her to back down the stairs to descend more safely. At times, she used a chamber pot on the main floor in order to keep from having to go down the basement steps so often.

How Rural Development Helped:

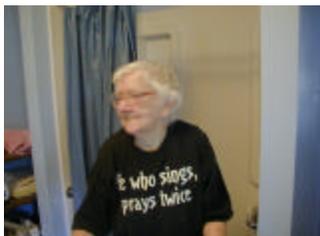
Rural Development partnered with West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD) to help eliminate Irline's dilemma. WCNDD had funding earmarked to do extensive repairs to Irline's home, but had reached the maximum amount of funding that they could supply for the repair project. Due to Irline's age and income, a mortgage to pay for installation of a main floor bathroom was out of the question. USDA Rural Development stepped up to assist through its Rural Housing Repair Grant program which leveraged with WCNDD's dollars, funded the installation of a bathroom on the main floor.

Results:

Irline is now enjoying her new main floor bathroom, which includes a 48" shower with grab bars and a seat, toilet with grab bars for extra safety, bathroom sink set into a storage cabinet, and new vinyl flooring. The contractor who performed the work also completed the other repairs to her home. This made it easier for him to coordinate both projects to get the work done efficiently.

"I am very pleased with my new main floor bathroom," states Irline. "This is my 'luxury hotel'," she says smilingly.

USDA Rural Development's grant dollars assisted Irline to live a safer and healthier life.



Irline Barnica showing her bathroom.



Shower with grab bars and seat.



Stool equipped with grab bars.



New cabinet and vinyl flooring.